AIAChicagoFoundation

AIA Chicago Foundation honors Emily Ray, AIA, with 2024 Dubin Family Young Architect Award

""Those who say it can't be done are usually interrupted by others doing it." Emily is someone doing it." – Larry Kearns, FAIA, LEED AP; Principal, Wheeler Kearns Architects

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The AIA Chicago Foundation, the charitable not-for-profit organization which invests in Chicago's next generation of architectural change-makers through scholarships, grants, and recognition, announces **Emily Ray, AIA**, Project Architect at Wheeler Kearns Architects is the recipient of the 2024 AIA Chicago Dubin Family Young Architect Award. Emily will be celebrated at the AIA Chicago's *Designight 2024* event held on September 5, 2024 at The Harris Theater for Music and Dance in Chicago.

"Emily's demonstrated influence is about people. She is a firm leader, an advocate, and a mentor." said **Neil P. Frankel, FAIA, FIIDA**, former design director at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Emily's mentor in AIA Chicago's Bridge Mentorship Program. *"Emily stands for making things better and making them right."*

Committed to those who envision a future they have not yet seen; Emily's career revolves around equity. A 2010 graduate from the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture, Emily's work focuses on nonprofit and community-based clients centered on education, arts, and social services. As a founding member of AIA Chicago's LGBTQIA+ Alliance, the first of such groups in the nation dedicated to queer architects, Emily continues to be a champion for those who envision a future they have not yet seen.

As a Project Architect at Wheeler Kearns Architects, where she has been practicing since 2017, her work has received numerous awards and accolades. Her notable projects include: Broadway Youth Center, a dignified space for LGBTQ+ individuals with access to social and medical services; Great Lakes Academy Expansion, the conversion of a deconsecrated church into an enrichment center for K-8 students; Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School Expansion, a school that embodies Jewish principles into the building to teach and engage with students; Open Books Logan Square, a nonprofit store for used books that donates profits to local literacy initiatives; and Cow Cat Studio, a project with her partner that is a meeting and studio space for emerging artists and entrepreneurs.

Prior to her time at Wheeler Kearns Architects, Ray practiced at HBRA Architects in Chicago. There, she worked tirelessly on several projects, including the McCormick Theater Renovation at the Chicago History Museum, a project that sparked her interest in educational and community-focused architecture.

Accompanying her professional experience, Emily makes it a priority to be heavily involved in Chicago's architectural community. In addition to serving as a founding member of the AIA Chicago LGBTQIA+ Alliance, she has also volunteered with the ACE Mentor program, Nourishing Hope, Garfield Park Community Council, Territory NFP, Institute of Classical Art and Architecture (ICAA) Acanthus Awards, and Wheeler Kearns Architects "Behind the Fence" program, which provides students and the building's users the opportunity to see firsthand how professionals of different disciplines come together to construct buildings.

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The Young Architect Award was established in 1983 to recognize excellence in ability and exceptional contributions by young Chicago area architects. In 2003, the award was renamed the Dubin Family Young Architect Award thanks to the generosity of the family of the late **M. David Dubin, FAIA**, the 1971 AIA Chicago President.

Previous recipients of the Dubin Family Young Architect Award include **Breah Page, AIA** (2023); **Alzira Maldonado Protsishin, AIA** (2021); **Heidi Wang, AIA** (2020); **Jennifer Park, AIA** (2019); **Matthew McGrane, AIA** (2018); **Anthony Viola, AIA** (2017); **Vladimir Radutny, AIA** (2016); and **Chris-Annmarie Spencer, AIA** (2015).

The AIA Chicago Foundation is a partner organization of AIA Chicago, the second largest local chapter of The American Institute of Architects and the collective voice of nearly 4,000 licensed architects, emerging professionals, architecture students, and allied professionals in the Chicagoland area.

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